

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-13

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3296

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BG, PK, IN

SUBJ: PAK-BANGLADESH RELATIONS AND THE LAHORE SUMMIT

REF: DACCA 5502 AND LAHORE 170

SUMMARY: PAKS, AFTER INITIALLY INDICATING CONCERN AT
THOUGHT OF BANGLADESH ATTENDANCE AT LAHORE ISLAMIC SUMMIT,
SWITCHED THEIR LINE SOME WEEKS AGO AND HAVE SINCE BEEN
PUBLICLY URGING BDG TO ATTEND. PAKS OBVIOUSLY HOPE
TO USE SUMMIT TO ENGINEER BHUTTO-MUJIB MEETING THEY
CLAIM TO NEED AS PRELUDE TO RECOGNITION BANGLADESH.
RUMORED HERE, HOWEVER, THAT MUJIB HAS ALREADY DETERMINED
SHUN SUMMIT IN ABSENCE PRIOR PAK RECOGNITION. END
SUMMARY.

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1. GOP HAS, OVER PAST MONTH, MADE SERIES OF PUBLIC

STATEMENTS EXPRESSING HOPE THAT BANGLADESH WOULD ATTEND ISLAMIC SUMMIT IN LAHORE. ALTHOUGH STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN WORDED TO AVOID SUGGESTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTENDANCE AND GOP-BDG BILATERAL RELATIONS (LAHORE REFTEL) GOP OBVIOUSLY HAS COME TO SEE SUMMIT AS OPPORTUNITY TO OVERCOME IMPASSE OVER PAK DESIRE FOR PRIOR UNDERSTANDING WITH BDG BEFORE RECOGNITION AND BDG INSISTANCE ON RECOGNITION AS PRECONDITION TO ANY MEETING.

2. A MONTH AGO, EMBOFFS FOUND GOP OFFICIALS PRIVATELY EDGY OVER POSSIBILITY THAT BDG MIGHT WANT TO ATTEND SUMMIT. PAKS RELUCTANTLY AGREED NOT TO OPPOSE AN INVITATION REPORTEDLY AS RESULT OF PRESSURE BY ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT. ONCE COMMITTED, HOWEVER, PAKS APPARENTLY CAME TO REALIZATION THEY COULD TURN BDG ATTENDANCE TO THEIR ADVANTAGE AND HAVE SINCE USED VARIETY OF PUBLIC FORUMS TO WELCOME BANGLADESH WITH OPEN ARMS AS MUSLIM BROTHERS. BHUTTO, IN SPEECHES DURING LATE JANUARY TOUR OF SIND, EXPANDED ON OLD THEMES IN PAK-BANGLADESH RELATIONS, CALLING ON AUDIENCE TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT BDG, POINTING OUT THAT GOP MUST ONE DAY GRANT RECOGNITION AND ASSERTING IT ONLY PROPER FOR BANGLADESH TO ATTEND ISLAMIC SUMMIT. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HE EXPLICITLY URGED MUJIB TO COME, SAYING THAT "IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO MEET YOUR PAKISTANI BRETHERN, YOU CAN MEET HEADS OF MUSLIM STATES" HE MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT WHILE MUJIB WOULD BE WELCOME AT SUMMIT, IT WOULD BE "UNFAIR" TO MAKE ATTENDANCE CONDITIONAL ON PRIOR GOP RECOGNITION. THAT, HE SAID, WAS ENTIRELY SEPARATE MATTER TO BE TAKEN UP "AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME ON PRINCIPLE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE".

3. ALTHOUGH WELCOMING BANGLADESH SUMMIT ATTENDANCE, BHUTTO ALSO HIT SOME LESS FLATTERING NOTES ON SIND TRIP - THE RESULT, PRESUMABLY, OF TRYING TO CONVEY DIFFERING MESSAGES TO HIS DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN AUDIENCES. DEFENDING HIMSELF AGAINST CHARGES OF HAVING CONTRIBUTED TO BREAKUP OF COUNTRY IN 1970/71, HE DWELT AT LENGTH ON AWAMI LEAGUE'S TRANSGRESSIONS AND UNREASONABLENESS DURING THAT PERIOD. HE ALSO CHARGED THAT PEOPLE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BANGLADESH WERE POORER THAN BEFORE AND UNDER THE THUMB OF INDIA AS WELL. SOME PRESS ACCOUNTS SAY HE OFFERED TRADE AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH.

4. CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE MUJIB'S ATTENDANCE AT LAHORE WAS CARRIED STEP FURTHER IN FEBRUARY 1 PRESS CONFERENCE (LAHORE REFTEL) IN WHICH GOP SPOKESMAN URGED BDG TO RISE ABOVE PAROCHIAL INTERESTS AND JOIN

IN CAUSE "SACRED TO MUSLIMS ALL OVER THE WORLD".
SPOKESMAN ALSO SUGGESTED SEMANTIC GIMMICK BY WHICH
BANGLADESH COULD PARTICIPATE ON BASIS "SOVEREIGN
EQUALITY" EVEN IN ABSENCE PAK RECOGNITION. THEME WAS
REPEATED FOLLOWING DAY WHEN GOP RELEASED TEXT OF BHUTTO'S
REPLY TO MESSAGE FROM UGANDA PRESIDENT IDI AMIN URGING
RECONCILIATION BETWEEN PAKS AND BENGALIS.

5. PAK MEDIA FEBRUARY 7 REPORTED THAT SEC GEN AL-TOHAMY
OF ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT HAD EXTENDED FORMAL CONFERENCE
INVITATION TO MUJIB ON FEBRUARY 5 AND HAD COMMENTED
THAT HE WANTED BD TO ATTEND AS A "SOVEREIGN STATE" AND
THAT IT WOULD BE THE "FIRST STEP TOWARDS RECOGNITION OF
BANGLADESH BY PAKISTAN". REPORTS ALSO CARRIED GOP SPOKE-
MAN'S "REGRET" THAT BDG CONTINUED TO DEMAND PRIOR
RECOGNITION AS CONDITION FOR ATTENDANCE AND REPORTED
INDONESIAN OFFER OF GOOD OFFICES TO BHUTTO AND MUJIB
FOR DISCUSSIONS TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES.

6. COMMENT: THIS SOUNDS LIKE SCRIPT PLAYED OUT NUMBER
OF TIMES BEFORE, WITH BHUTTO SEEKING FORMULA TO
OBTAIN MEETING WITH MUJIB BEFORE RECOGNITION AND
MUJIB HOLDING OUT FOR RECOGNITION BEFORE
MEETING.

EFFORTS TO USE LAHORE SUMMIT AS WAY OF
LURING BANGLADESH INTO SITUATION THAT COULD SATISFY PAK
REQUIREMENT FOR "MEETING" ARE INGENIOUS BUT - IN OPINION
OF OUTSIDE OBSERVERS HERE - PROBABLY WON'T WORK. RUMORS
ARE CURRENT HERE THAT MUJIB HAS MADE UNEQUIVOCAL
PRIVATE DECLARATION THAT BDG WILL NOT ATTEND SUMMIT
UNLESS GOP EXTENDS PRIOR RECOGNITION.
BYROADE

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